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October 9, 1946

TO: OFW - Mr. Harry Kurth

SUBJECT: Notes on Program for Overseas Personnel in Research and Intelligence

REFERENCE: Memorandum from OFS, Mr. Julian Harrington, dated September 13, 1946, to OFW, Mr. Harry Kurth, concerning the Research and Intelligence Program.

1. The life blood of intelligence is the stream of raw material from primary sources in the field. The Foreign Service covers official, and many unofficial, sources of political and economic information, but at many points specialists are needed to unearth intelligence materials buried in inaccessible places or behind barriers of language. We have had recently admissions from the Research Divisions that they are largely dependent on public sources of information because of the limited range of information received through the Foreign Service.

2. Foreign Service officers often have neither the time nor the training to perform the function of the specialized researcher whose work must be uninterrupted and who must be equipped with many years of linguistic and bibliographical training. This is as true in the field as it is in the Department. In fact, a proposal to staff the Research Divisions from top to bottom with Foreign Service or Department political officers would be just as logical as to maintain that the Foreign Service alone can discharge the full function of research and intelligence in the field. The Research Divisions require country specialists who devote years of research to a single area or language. The long standing need of the Department for research specialists has been widely recognized, as well as the fact that it could not be met simply by assigning additional political or Foreign Service officers to the country desks. It is submitted that the need for research specialists in the field is equivalent to the need for specialists in the Department. Specialists will be sent, of course, where they are requested and needed and nowhere else. The language factor alone suggests that the need is greater in Eastern Europe, the Near and Far East, than it is in Western Europe or Latin America, which use European languages with which most Foreign Service officers are familiar.

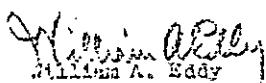
3. The need, it should be made clear, is for specialists in a business which is very specialized--a business to which men give many years of training and of concentration upon a single geographic

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or linguistic area, or political or economic field. This profession does not permit the researcher to become equally proficient as a political officer, nor to serve in many parts of the world. Conversely, the Foreign Service officer who prepares himself for representation anywhere in the world does not have the time nor the narrow training to become a life-long specialist in one area, and frequently he is not a specialist in the local language. There is no intention to suggest that the overseas specialists in research and intelligence should constitute a separate staff to complicate the administration of the mission. It is hoped, on the contrary, that they would hold appointments in the Foreign Service Reserve and be in every way integrated with the mission and under the complete direction of the Chief of Mission. The only particular requirement in each case would be that the specialist be selected and trained by the Research Division whose specific needs he should help to meet. He should leave for the field armed with accurate knowledge of the research needs to be met, of the gaps to be filled, maps, and biographical data needed by the Department. After his term of duty with the Foreign Service is over, he would then return to the Research Division where his services would be strengthened and improved by his experience of collecting and reporting in the field.

4. Under the Russell Plan the Research and Intelligence Organization has been adopted by the Department and its work has been integrated with the operations of the Department. Such adoption and integration imply an acceptance of the responsibility for obtaining political and economic intelligence abroad, not only to meet the needs of the operating offices of the Department, but also the needs arising out of demands for political and economic intelligence made by the JSC, OGI, C-2, CIC and other agencies of the Government. The Department must either permit the other intelligence agencies to secure their own intelligence in those fields, or it can insist upon exclusive responsibility for all positive political and economic intelligence abroad. In the latter case, however, it will do us no good to stake out a claim if we at the same time reject the field staff needed to meet the obligation. To fail to provide for trained overseas personnel in research and intelligence will make it very difficult, if not impossible, to persuade the other intelligence services that they should leave to the Department of State exclusive responsibility for political and economic intelligence. It will also make the Department a very junior partner in the development of the national intelligence program.



William A. Eddy  
Special Assistant for  
Research and Intelligence

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